



Directorate of
Intelligence

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CIA DI

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Narcotics Review

April 1986

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Narcotics Review

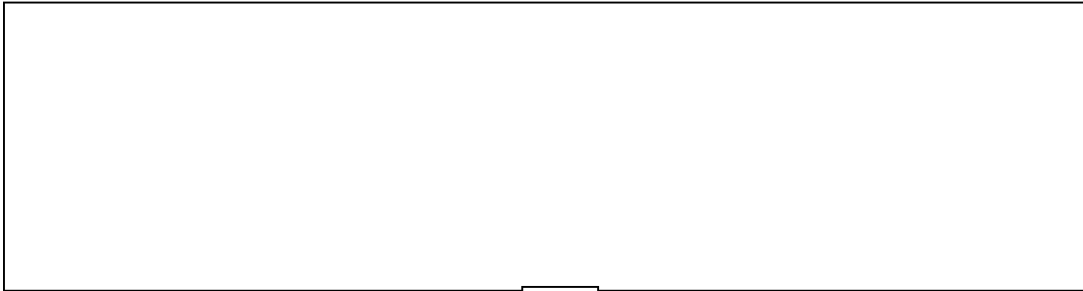
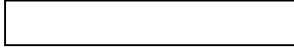
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Worldwide Narcotics Highlights

A summary of key developments from 1 February to 1 April 1986.



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Mexico

- The media reported in March that a federal judge released, for lack of evidence, the son of the influential leader of the Durango-based Herrera drug clan who was being held on charges of narcotics trafficking. Following the release, which reportedly has provoked public shock and disbelief, the Attorney General sent officials to Durango to review the case. The Attorney General probably felt that

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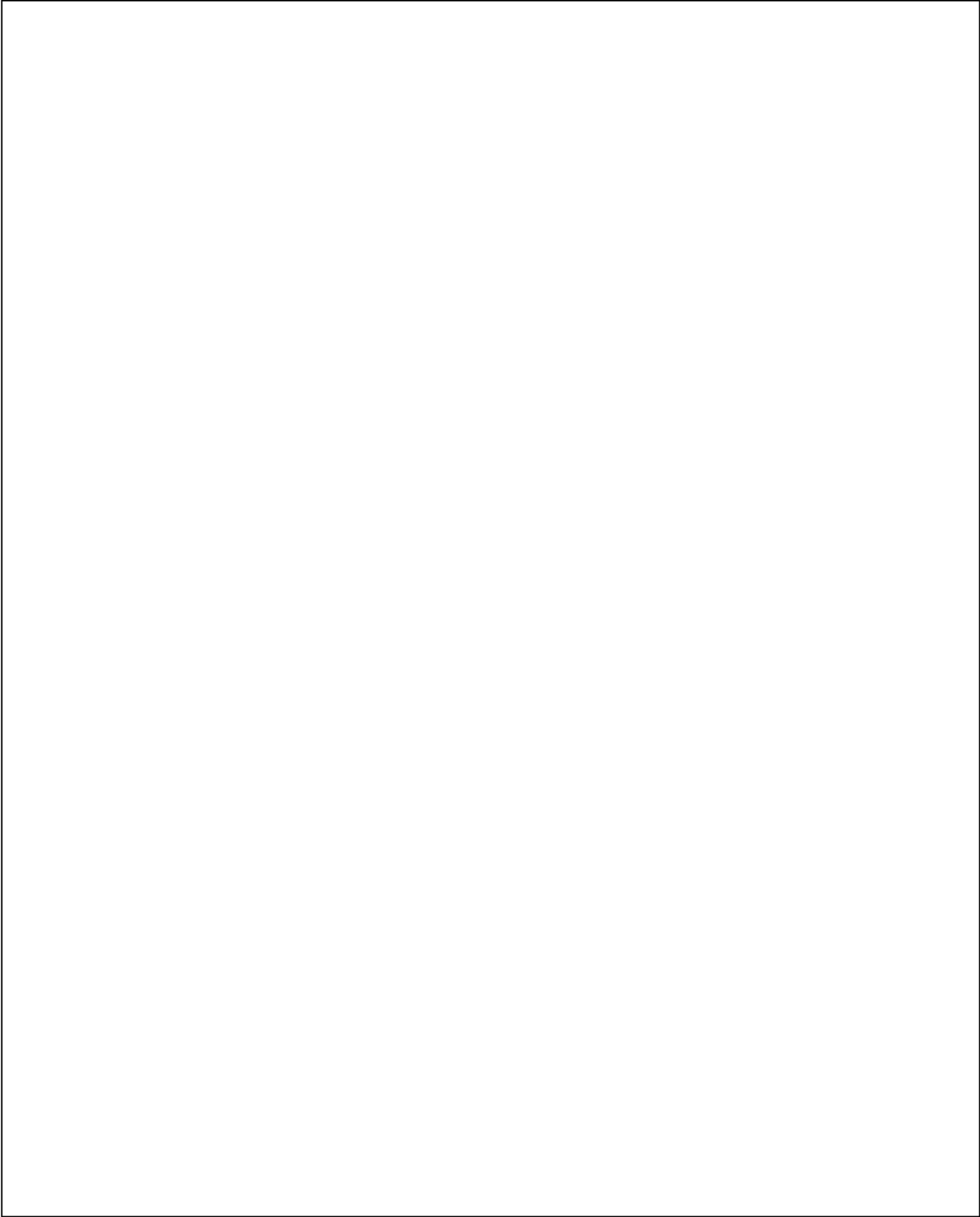
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some action was needed to blunt public criticism and to head off charges of corruption that are sure to surface. We believe that the release is a setback to the Mexican antidrug effort; and based on the government's previous record, the review is unlikely to result in a reversal of the decision or to lead to the recapture of the smuggler.

Mexican press reports suggest the government has made little progress in prosecuting two imprisoned drug dealers implicated in the killing in early 1985 of US Drug Enforcement Administration officer Camarena. The traffickers—Rafael Caro Quintero and Ernesto Fonseca—were arrested about a month after the officer's death. By law, the presiding judge has one year after the defendants are formally charged—17 April in this case—to review the evidence and reach a verdict. Mexico stands to lose whether or not it prosecutes the two. The traffickers almost certainly have threatened to expose high-level corruption or to order reprisals if the authorities convict and punish them. Continued inaction, however, would damage Mexico's attempt to seek US help with its financial crisis. Mexico may try to hold the traffickers indefinitely while trying to deflect US pressure with promises to reactivate the case as soon as more urgent problems are solved.

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